

Club Membership Flourishes

One of the roles I have as Secretary is to keep track of Club membership. At the moment we have 168 members and it's growing month on month - not bad for a club that has only been in existence for two years! Around 50% are owner/shareholders, 15% renters and 25% students. The other 10% are instructors, associate members etc. Some owner/shareholders are based at other airfields but being members at Fife gives them unlimited free landings for the price of one landing a month. It's a win for them and a win for the club and the airfield operator. Many of them participate in the activities of the club and we're delighted to have them.

Training is the seed corn of a successful aero club. Some PPL students will go on to take higher licences and perhaps make a career in aviation but many will be the renters and owner/shareholders of the future. We are very appreciative of the support of CFI Jeremy Billinge and several part-time instructors who are bringing on the student pilots (as well as carrying out routine check rides for PPLs).



Five have soloed so far: Max Bishop, Stephen Docherty, Colin Dorward (pictured), Alex James and Jamie Saunders. We congratulate them all and wish them every success for the rest of their training. I understand there are several others likely to solo in the near future. There are also a couple of students not far off taking the Skills Test for their Private Pilot Licence.

We look forward to an exciting new year in the life of Edinburgh and Fife Aero Club.

Chris Anderson. Secretary

Airfield Update – from Jim Watt.

I thought it important to let everyone know how the airfield is operated and what has been done over the year and of course where we go next. It might look like everything is merged as such but we have several

stand-alone entities despite it being Jim Kate and Callum Watt at the heart of it all. What we have tried to create is a "pilot collective" giving access to aviation and aircraft to a broad spectrum of people. The Airfield is operated by FlightPlan Aviation Ltd. That is dealing with the day to day running of the airfield, managing the hangars etc. and providing the fuel. Essentially the on-site services. We have engineered some structural changes in the lease of the airfield securing its long-term future. With this we took on the maintenance of the site including the buildings. So we set about delivering a number of goals to improve the site overall.



With the site being 60 years old some of this was a big challenge and maybe a lot of the effort and investment would be unseen by many of the members but I hope many will of course appreciate the work that has gone into the site over the past year.

This included repairs to Hangar one doors including recladding the doors etc. Insulation has been added to the internal bulkhead to help with the heating of the building itself.

A new Air Source heating system has been installed within the main café and school area including the back three classrooms and office. This has made a huge difference to the heating capability and the energy bills. The ceilings have been fully insulated and all the tiles replaced and new LED lighting. 72 Solar panels have been fitted to the roof of Hangar one which now supports the energy use within the building.

The ladies and gents toilets have been refurbished. Drainage work completed on the runway and taxiways and the line markings redone. General site tidying up overall to make the site an appealing and useful site for aviators.

We installed the control tower and it is now equipped with a virtual radar which includes ADSB, Flarm and Pilot Aware .



The Flight School is now well established using Fife Flight Centre as the DTO (Declared Training Organisation). This was inspected by the CAA in August and given their approval. FFC now has some 30 plus students who are a

mixture of Private pilots and would-be commercial pilots. The Flight Centre will include a new concept in flight training which will see the development of a Commercial Pilot Pathway and the establishment of an Aviation Academy.

We have increased the Instructor complement with very experienced commercial pilots. Jeremy and Malcolm are back but still part time. Some of the new instructors include:

- Blair Boyle, a retired airline captain, ex-numerous airlines and has been an instructor on the A380 and he currently is an instructor on the B737 simulator for Korean Airlines. He spends one month in Korea then one month at Fife.
- Henry Abraham, ex-Loganair, Jet2 and an Emirates Airbus pilot.
- Darren Agnew, ex-Tayside, ex-Flybe, ex-Loganair and now currently a FO with Jet2 on the 737.
- Peter Hodges is ex-Tayside and a current SFO with Loganair on the ATR42.
- Jordan Jennings is joining in the new year, he is ex-Tayside and currently a SFO with Loganair on the ATR42.
- Pedro Ruisanchez, ex-Tayside and current an ATR42 FO with Loganair joins in the new year.
- Also - Jim Watt will join the instructor complement – ex-Tayside MD.

Within this instructional team is a significant wealth of knowledge and experience which will help propel us forward into 2025 and a new concept in flight training. Watch this space.

Aeroplanes.

The two Tecnams G-HACS and G-TECA have served us well over the year. The Warrior, G-BGKS is also on strength, as is the TB10 G-CONL.

The good news is that we will be taking delivery of two brand new Elixir Aircraft in the coming weeks.....





Elixir Aircraft are based in La Rochelle, France. The company was formed in 2015. It achieved EASA CS23 certification in 2020 and deliveries of its new aircraft started in 2022.

G-RLXA and G-RLXB are state of the art, very sophisticated modern aircraft which will form part of a new



concept in flight training. Fully glass cockpit trainers with full autopilot and ballistic parachutes is a major leap forward in aircraft manufacturing and design. Look out for these coming soon and Fife is the first in the UK to have these Elixir Aircraft.

Check out the company's website at [Elixir Aircraft](https://www.elixir-aircraft.com).

EFAC.

Edinburgh & Fife AeroClub was set up to replace the old Fife Flying Club with the principle to allowing a club structure to exist supported by the airport operator.



EFAC has its own autonomy aimed at supporting and nurturing new members and events.

A joint venture between the AeroClub, the Airfield operator and the Parachute Centre ran a successful ROCC course to get some new Ground Radio operators in November.

EFAC Events

In terms of events I think EFAC was pretty new and not yet able to run events so the Airport ran a number of small events throughout the year to help support the site. The annual Torque event normally held at Broomhall House near Limekilns was cancelled this year. This event supports the RAF Benevolent Trust so the Airfield stepped in to host this. It was a great success and demonstrated what the site can deliver. RAF Benevolent Fund Charity Car Event at Fife Airport.

EFAC – in 2025

We hope to run a few events at Fife in 2025 and hope that the Aeroclub can help support these as without the growing body of volunteer support the Fly-in events are difficult to run as a number of people are needed to assist with marshalling etc. So please get involved in the AeroClub.

Jim Watt

Name that Plane.....



The aircraft from the last Newsletter was a Thorp T-18 – and there is one in hangar 3 at Fife!

Probably the only flyable one in the UK. It looks like a Vans but is not a Vans..... One Thorp flew around the world in 1976 – the first such flight by a home-built aircraft.

The aircraft for this newsletter: Unusual wing design inspired by the designer watching the wind blow over a barn roof!



Buddy Up!

The last 12 months has seen massive change at Fife Airfield. Hangar improvements, new heating system, new aircraft, increase in qualified radio operators and up to 42 folks doing PPLs is testament to the on-going work by so many.

The Club is keen to nurture and promote fellowship within our expanding flying community. Executing on and completing a PPL is a terrific accomplishment. Just like passing a driving test though, it is continuous improvement and experience that shapes us as safer pilots. So, we are most enthusiastic about our new aviator buddy system.

Trialling this throughout November and December has shown initial traction and success. Students have been able to buddy up with experienced pilots out-with training. This allows you to co-pilot and gain experience while not under the gaze of your instructor. In short, takes the pressure off and lets you ask “stupid” questions, while gaining more context.

Many of our club members are only too willing to take you flying on our dollar, to help you in any area that's helpful. This could be:

- Experiencing a zone transit across Edinburgh airspace
- Some circuit awareness
- A cross country exercise
- Radio procedure
- MATZ penetration
- A land away

I recall my first MATZ zone transit with my instructor. The RAF controller gave me a read back something like this - “G-TECA, basic service, squawk 7403, MATZ penetration approved, VFR, south to north, not above 1,500 feet QFE 1010, report entering zone.”

My reply was something like “I want my mummy”. My instructor took over the radio and saved further embarrassment....

Everything comes in time and our new buddy system is an innovative, but simple new tool to add to our Club community. Look out on Runway 24 on WhatsApp for members offering a date or put out a general enquiry and see who picks it up.

We're all in this together!

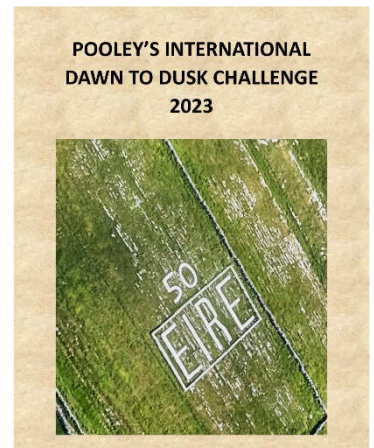
Jim Duffy.

EIREBORNE – POOLEYS INTERNATIONAL DAWN TO DUSK CHALLENGE 2023

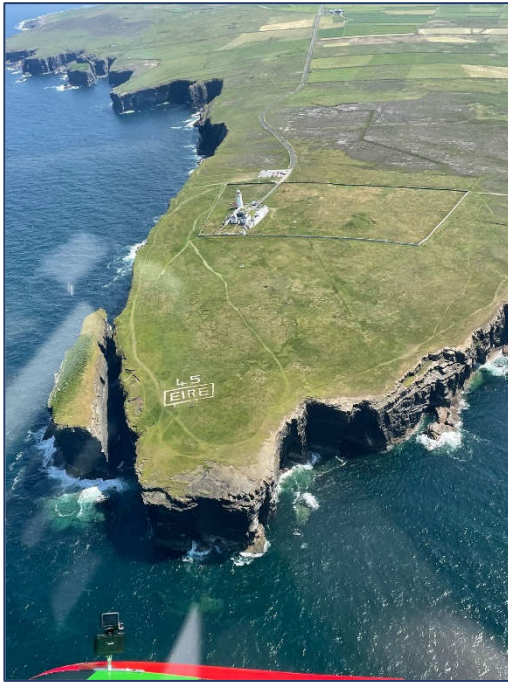
After entering Pooleys Dawn to Dusk Challenge in 2022 and coming 3rd in that year's competition by flying around all the 282 Munro peak summits located in Scotland in a day, Club member Derek Pake re-entered the competition in 2023 hoping for some further success. Along with fellow crew member, Kate Turner, the team would complete a circumnavigation of the island of Ireland, with the entry title of 'EIREBORNE.'

During World War 2, a time that the Irish called 'The Emergency', the Irish Free State (now the Republic of Ireland) remained neutral from both the Allies and the Axis Forces. The strategic location of Ireland however made it an area where seaborne and airborne forces of both sides in the War were regularly known to be operating. There were many aerial incursions by aircraft into neutral airspace, including quite a few forced landings and crashes on Irish soil. The Irish military

established a network of 83 Coast Watch Service Lookout Points (LOPs) from County Louth in the Northeast clockwise around the coast to County Donegal in the Northwest. Manned by a Corporal and around 8 local men, all with good knowledge of the surrounding seas and coastline, these posts kept watch 24 hours a day for shipping and aircraft, reporting sightings to military intelligence Headquarters in Dublin. In addition, each site was given a large whitewashed stone sign that read 'EIRE' along with the identification number of the LOP. The position and number of each LOP was passed covertly to the US Ambassador in Dublin and these appeared on Allied aircrew navigational charts drawn up by the US Army Air Force. This allowed crews to determine their actual positions and navigate to Allied territory in Northern Ireland or the UK. Most of the remains of the LOPs are still there to this day but only around 30 of the 'EIRE' markers can be seen, in various states of repair.



The 2023 Challenge was to fly over and photograph each of the 83 LOPs and the remaining 'EIRE' markers in a day trip from Prestwick. If possible, the 19 WW2 Allied airfields in Northern Ireland would also be



overflowed as a supplementary objective. The trip took place on 21st June 2023 and was undertaken over 7 flight legs from Prestwick-Waterford-Inisheer-Inishmaan-Inishmore-Sligo-Enniskillen-Donegal-Carrickfinn-Prestwick in a Vans RV8 aircraft G-WEEV. All the LOPs were overflown but only 7 of the Northern Ireland airfields were overflown due to poor weather in the latter part of the day. Flying 1,141 Nautical Miles in 7 hours 45 minutes flight time at an average speed of 144 Knots, the aircraft used 288 Litres (68 Imperial Gallons) of Avgas during the trip. The trip generated over 7 hours of video footage and hundreds of air-ground photos to document the sites flown over and to provide illustrations for the competition Log which along with



a narrative describing the flight planning, preparation, and execution in detail was submitted to the competition judges.

A short video was also prepared, along with original music, which also formed part of the team's submission.

Judging took place between October 2023 and February 2024, and in mid-February 2024 the Pooleys International Dawn to Dusk Challenge Award Dinner was held at the RAF Club in London where Derek and Kate took first prize of £1000 and the Duke of Edinburgh Tiger Club Trophy. Their flight for 2024 has already been flown and their entry submitted. 'Aurora ad Vesperam – Carpe Diem.' It promises to be another great entry !!

Derek Pake

Further Reminiscences of an Aged Aviator.

Casual perusal of my logbooks tends to concentrate on destinations, dates, types flown, and weather conditions. However, from the brief shorthand notes accompanying several flights, I was able to reconstruct anecdotal memories of some of my passengers. Some enlightening and some amusing.

A fond memory brings to mind an elderly gentleman, the father of a friend, who I flew in 2006 overhead Alloa, his birthplace. It was a beautiful summer day with blue sky and some small fluffy cumulus over the Ochil Hills. While thanking me profusely he remarked that he was eighty-seven years old and it was the first time he had seen clouds from both sides. Shades of Joni Mitchell!

On another occasion, an old but very sprightly gentlemen was flown over the same area, and told me of the nights he had patrolled the Ochil Hills as a member of the Home Guard. While defending Tillicoultry from the might of the Third Reich, it was sometimes midnight before they got a hot pie. Aye, he had a hard war. Upon landing, he continued his life story and concluded by telling me "I was born in nineteen fourteen, I don't think anything else happened that year" (?)

A slightly more detailed note brings to mind a memorable trip with a lady celebrating a special birthday. I don't remember which, honestly. It was a surprise flight and I presented her with a

headset following a birthday lunch, telling her we were going up. Absolutely delighted, she appeared to be remarkably knowledgeable on aviation procedures, and prompted by my questioning told me her story. Leaving school and working for a short spell as a clerk she longed for a bit of adventure and joined the RAF. Following basic training, during which she wondered if she had made the right decision, she applied for the Steward and Hospitality Branch. It was the days of the Singapore Slip, when RAF crews were regularly flying to the Far East. After several applications for aircrew, during which time she was serving in Officer's Messes, she was eventually selected, trained, and awarded her brevet.

Dreams of sunning in the Maldives were soon dashed when she was posted to Kinloss. Initially serving in the mess again, she soon found herself on board a Shackleton, one of the "Gray Ladies", wearing a flying suit and flying long hours over the dark Atlantic.

What followed was a very enjoyable few years, and when she wasn't dishing out bacon rolls and coffee to her crew, occupied several of the seats on board, including the right-hand pilot's seat, flying the aircraft under the watchful eye of the captain. She told me that her crews were always protective of her, treating her like a younger sister, although she warned them that the Elsan toilet was for number ones only, as she had to clean it!

Eventually marrying an Engineer, she left the Service, becoming an RAF wife, but pride of place in her living room is a picture of a Mk 3 Shackleton, signed by her crew, as a leaving present.

Many more memories are included in the pages, but time and space precludes their telling here. Some enjoyable, like the American gentleman on an experience flight, who told me later that he'd flown as a flight engineer on Whitworth Argosys. Or, the chap who had celebrated his birthday with lunch and a couple of pints at the golf club and then deposited said lunch in the back of a C172. As I shampooed the carpet, I reflected on the glamour of flying!

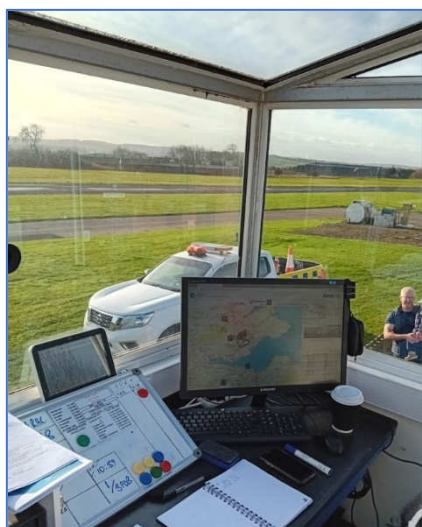
Jim Millar

The FROG Report

FROG is the Fife Radio Operators Group. We provide Air/Ground radio cover at Fife on a volunteer basis and have been doing so since July 2021. We cover the weekends and the occasional weekday if SkyDive are operating. and to start with, in 2021, we had four certificated operators signed off for Fife airfield. Over the years we have held training courses and brought in CAA certified examiners to carry out the tests and we now have nine fully qualified operators. We have been fortunate to have had the

excellent support of several other operators over the years. In November we held a training/exam session for seven new volunteers. Some are EFAC members but we have also invited non-members to get involved. We look forward to welcoming the new blood to FROG.

Just because you see someone in the radio caravan doesn't necessarily mean there's parachuting going on so look out for the red "Drop Zone Active"



notices in the windows. In any event, drop in to the tower for a chat. We are always pleased to see you but we might stop the conversation in mid-sentence !

Chris Anderson FROG Co-ordinator

Aero Space Kinross – Eurofox twins!

Our second school Build-a-Plane Eurofox has completed its flight testing and been granted a Permit to Fly. This one (which is registered as a microlight through the BMAA whereas the first is on the LAA register) is currently based at Portmoak, but we are encouraging all pilots to be members of EFAC. Shares available for both.



Contact: alisdair@aerospacekinross.com 07825 698613

Model Madness...

Perusing as I often do the pages of ebay for any interesting things aeronautical that might be on there, I recently came across what looked like a nice little model of a Mustang P51-B. It looked like it had a wingspan of about 20cm and would look really nice on the shelf in my study. Only one bid on it, so I stuck in my maximum that my wallet ought to allow and behold – I got it, for £29. A bargain, I thought.



A few days later a relatively huge box appeared on my doorstep. The photo had been deceiving.... The wingspan of the model was just shy of 50c. But, a lovely piece of work, kiln-dried mahogany with umpteen layers of paint and lacquer.



The aircraft is a racing version of the Mustang and I was curious about the markings – “Super K” and “The Believer”. A bit of research showed that the real thing was owned at one time by a person (Jerome K....?) who was in the aviation industry and there was some controversy about sales of parts to the USAF for the B-1 bomber by his company.

When I got the model, I found all the details on the web. Since then the information seems to have disappeared, and even the “mustangsmustangs.com” website doesn’t mention the aircraft – it seemed to be racing back in the early 1990s though. Can anyone help?

Alan Laing

There was a very successful informal event on Sunday 24th November. It was postponed from the previous day due to Storm Bert. Around 20 members and friends met for a chat and to enjoy a buffet lunch. The aim was for members to get to know each other. We were particularly keen to introduce student pilots to the “old hands” among us. There was a chance to share experiences and explore opportunities for buddying up. Airfield operator Jim Watt gave a presentation on exciting new aircraft soon to be available at Fife. (*More details elsewhere in this newsletter.*) EFAC Chairman Jim Duffy spoke about possible future club activities. Thanks to Sharon Maguire for providing the excellent buffet.

Events in a similar format will be held on alternate Saturday mornings.

Chris Anderson

Doric Humour - An Air Experience Flight

At one Aberdeen Airport open day, a flying club from down south was offering pleasure flights in a World War 1 biplane and was doing a roaring trade, despite the fact that, as the day wore on, the wind was getting stronger and stronger.

Last in the queue were a farmer from New Pitsligo and his wife. By the time their turn came round, the wind was really quite strong. “It’s up to you,” said the pilot. “Air Traffic Control says we are OK for the moment, but I have to warn you that it will be quite bumpy. You won’t be frightened?”

“Michty, nivver a fleg,” said the farmer. “I’m a fairmer fae Pitsliga wi a big overdraft at the bunk. There’s nae nithing can scare the likes o’ me. Dee yer warst. Bit if it’s gaun tae be really bumpy, we’d be due a special price, I’m thinkin.” The pilot said he would cut his usual price of £30 to £10. (*Must have been a few decades ago!*) Then to add a little piquancy to the proceedings, said that the special price would apply only if the farmer was able not to scream or shout throughout the whole of the flight. The farmer accepted the challenge readily.

Not wanting to lose the £20 difference, the pilot put the plane through the worst of the windy weather, and then tried a few aerobatics, with spiral dives, rolls and loops.

But the farmer said not a word throughout it all.

When they taxied back to their part of the airport apron, the pilot helped the farmer out and accepted the £10 note that was offered.

“Well,” said the pilot, “I must say I admire your cool. I certainly wouldn’t have expected you to be able to stay quiet throughout all of that.”

“Weel,” said the farmer, “I will admit I near said something fin the wife fell oot.”

With acknowledgement to
“A Dash o’ Doric – the wit and wisdom of the North East”
by Robbie Shepherd and Norman Harper.
(Cannongate Books 1995)
Thanks to Chris Anderson for this!

As ever, please feel free to send stuff for the newsletter – to the editor, Alan Laing at alanlaing45@icloud.com. There must be many a tall tale of aviation out there that you could share. The section below is a gallery of a few photos – I am sure there must be tons of great photographs out there that you all take and file away after flying. Let’s see some of them:

Photo Gallery



These photos from Andy Maguire. Any guesses on the whereabouts of the photo below?



Glenforsa fly-in, June 2024. Do you remember sunshine and blue skies?

Some winter shots....



That is Killin on the far left. Shot taken looking west. Loch Tay was covered in fog.



Looking west towards Schiehallion with Loch Tummel and Loch Rannoch to the right.

A wise pilot (I can't remember who) once said to me – never fly over terrain in a single-engined aircraft unless you are dressed for a walk on that terrain. A good thought – an engine failure putting you down in terrain and conditions like that in the photos should be survivable. But what do you do next?



Loch of the Lowes near Dunkeld, looking south-east. Loads of Christmas trees!